



**Office of the Secretary**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

April 12, 2010

**TO:** Bishops of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Vice Presidents of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Secretaries of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Members of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Members of the Cabinet of Executives  
Regional Coordinators

**FROM:** Secretary David D. Swartling

**SUBJECT:** Report of Actions of the Church Council (April 9–11, 2010)

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) met at the Lutheran Center, Chicago, Illinois, on April 9–11, 2010. A variety of matters received attention. Here is a summary of particular actions along with background and explanatory information.

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**REVISION OF MINISTRY POLICIES**

The 2009 Churchwide Assembly took action to allow service in rostered ministry by people who are in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships. The assembly directed that necessary changes in policy be made and that any additional guidelines be developed. It further directed that provision be made within this church to respect diverse, faith-based commitments on this matter.

The ELCA has four rosters for public ministry: pastors, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers. The policies that guide preparation for public ministry are organized in the following official documents:

1. "Vision and Expectations" (for pastors): This

document is a statement of expectations and hopes and an invitation for reflection and consideration by those who seek to serve in the ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament.

2. "Vision and Expectations" (for associates in ministry, deaconesses, diaconal ministers): This document is for those called to serve in an ELCA rostered ministry of Word and Service and serves as an invitation for reflection and consideration by those who seek to enter such service.
3. "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline": This document describes the grounds for which rostered leaders may be subject to discipline according to the policies of this church.

4. **Candidacy Manual:** This manual contains the policies and procedures that guide the process of discerning and preparing for calls to public ministry and the steps by which this church moves toward approval of candidates for call.
5. **Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters:** This manual contains policy documents related to aspects of rostered ministry and includes the ecclesiastical endorsement of chaplains, military chaplaincy, reinstatement to the rosters, interim ministry, and retirement. [Revisions to the policy on reinstatement to the rosters were approved by the Church Council at its November 2009 meeting.]

The amendment process follows procedures mandated in the bylaws of this church, beginning with drafting by the appropriate churchwide units (Office of the Secretary and Vocation and Education) and by the Committee on Appeals, consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and consideration by the Church Council. The drafting and the consultation processes began following the 2009 Churchwide Assembly. Iterations of both "Vision and Expectations" and the Candidacy Manual were posted on the ELCA Web site for public review and response. Suggestions were considered as part of the revision process.

At its November 2009 meeting, the Church Council approved a protocol to guide consideration by the council of proposed revisions to ELCA ministry policies in response to action by the 2009 Churchwide Assembly. The protocol addressed factors including time line (October 2009–April 2010), participants, process, and documents and assigned overall responsibility to the collaboration of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee and the Program and Services Committee. Following its meeting on April 8, 2010, the Ad Hoc Committee issued a report and recommendations to the Church Council.

The Church Council's consideration of the documents proceeded in the following manner:

- The documents were considered individually.
- Ad Hoc Committee recommendations were considered first.
- Consideration of additional amendments that were not submitted by the deadline must be authorized by the body.
- When all amendments were considered, a final vote was taken.

The revised documents are posted on the ELCA Web site at [www.elca.org/ministry/policies](http://www.elca.org/ministry/policies).

#### **1. REVISION OF "DEFINITIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE"**

*Church Council Action:*

**To approve, as provided in bylaw 20.71.11 in the Constitutions Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the revised version of "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline" as established by the Committee on Appeals; and**

**To authorize the presiding bishop and secretary of this church, in consultation with the Committee on Appeals, to make any necessary editorial corrections.**

#### **2. REVISION OF "VISION AND EXPECTATIONS"**

*Church Council Action:*

**To adopt the revised version of "Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America"; and**

**To authorize the Vocation and Education unit, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary, to make any necessary editorial corrections.**

*Church Council Action:*

**To adopt the revised version of "Vision and Expectations: Associates in Ministry, Deaconesses, and Diaconal Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America"; and**

**To authorize the Vocation and Education unit, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary, to make any necessary editorial corrections.**

#### **3. REVISION OF THE CANDIDACY MANUAL**

*Church Council Action:*

**To adopt the revised Candidacy Manual; and**

**To authorize the Vocation and Education unit, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary, to make any necessary corrections for clarity and accuracy.**

#### **4. REVISIONS TO THE ELCA PENSION AND OTHER BENEFITS PROGRAM**

*Background:*

The 2009 Churchwide Assembly approved *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* and its implementing resolutions. Implementing Resolution 7 read: "To call upon the ELCA to amend the eligibility provisions of the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program, consistent with the policies of this church."

Since the Churchwide Assembly, staff members of the Board of Pensions have been researching the implications of this resolution, fully aware that the Churchwide Assembly action requires "policies of this

church” to be developed and approved by the Church Council. These specifically include “Vision and Expectations” and “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline.” It is important that amendments to the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program be consistent with the policy changes.

Preliminary work on plan amendments began following the assembly and included introductory discussions at the October–November 2009 Board of Trustees’ meeting.

While it was challenging to draft plan amendments prior to the approval of policy changes by the ELCA Church Council, the Board of Pensions drafted provisional amendments for the February–March 2010 Board of Trustees’ meeting, with the understanding that the time line preceded the spring 2010 Conference of Bishops and Church Council meetings. The Board of Pensions has worked closely with the Office of the Secretary and the Vocation and Education unit to be informed and updated with pertinent policy change recommendations as they have developed.

Plan amendments approved by the Board of Trustees in February–March 2010 were viewed as preliminary and subject to further revisions as necessitated by actions of the 2010 Conference of Bishops and Church Council meetings.

The proposed amendments are designed to provide the same benefits to an eligible same-gender partner as would be provided to a spouse, to the extent possible under each plan, and as permitted by federal law.

Following the action of the Church Council, the Board of Trustees of the Board of Pensions will meet by teleconference to finalize the amendments. The amended documents will be posted at [www.elcabop.org](http://www.elcabop.org).

#### *Church Council Action:*

**To approve amendments to the ELCA Retirement Plan, the ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan, the ELCA Survivor Benefits Plan, the ELCA Disability Benefits Plan, the ELCA Master Institutional Retirement Plan, and the ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan.**

### **5. RITE FOR RECEPTION ONTO THE ELCA ROSTER OF ORDAINED MINISTERS**

#### *Background:*

The Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reached a consensus March 8, 2010, on a draft proposal that, following approval of a synodical candidacy committee, would bring onto this church’s official clergy roster those pastors who were ordained by and are currently on the clergy roster of

Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries (ELM) and serving Lutheran congregations.

“Reception to the Roster of Ordained Ministers with Prayer and Laying on of Hands” has gone through the internal and external review process described in the document, “Review of Liturgical Material,” in the period since the March Conference of Bishops meeting.

The final revision of the rite has been reviewed and recommended by the Office of the Presiding Bishop as well as the Conference of Bishops. Many of the liturgical texts and notes are drawn directly from the authorized ordination rite, which received extensive review throughout this church prior to its publication in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship: Occasional Services* for the Assembly (2009). Some of these texts and rubrics have been adapted for the current context and purpose. These adaptations were the focus of the review.

The sole intent of the draft rite is to allow the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to receive onto its roster of ordained ministers those Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries (ELM) candidates who have been entrusted with a ministry of Word and Sacrament in an ordination that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has not recognized. This rite would follow their approval by a candidacy committee. “Reception to the Roster of Ordained Ministers with Prayer and the Laying on of Hands” is intended to be a rite that reflects the deep desire of the presiding bishop and synodical bishops for reconciliation both in this church and in the Church catholic. The hope of the presiding bishop and the Conference of Bishops is for a means of reception that embraces this church’s desire for reconciliation with the ELM pastors who are serving ELCA congregations and wish to be fully recognized as ordained ministers in this church. At the same time the rite must be recognizable by fellow members of the Lutheran World Federation and among the ELCA’s full-communion partners as containing signs consistent with ordination into the whole Church, in accordance with Lutheran Confessions, history, and practice. The rite brings to liturgical expression the reconciliation of relationships specific to this church while also seeking to respect this church’s ecumenical commitment to the ongoing reconciliation of ministry in the Church catholic.

In this rite, words are used that echo the promises of ordination and frequently are, in fact, words from the ordination rite. It will be apparent to those who examine or ultimately use this rite that it draws whenever possible directly from authorized texts while affirming promises made when the candidate was first entrusted with the ministry of Word and Sacrament. Since this rite falls under the category of “ministry rites” in the current

liturgical review policy, this final version of “Reception to the Roster of Ordained Ministers with Prayer and Laying on of Hands” must receive authorization by the Church Council as the appropriate form to be used in this church. It is prepared and restricted for “limited use,” intended to be used only by synodical bishops receiving ELM candidates within a two-year time limit.

*Church Council Action:*

**To authorize as the appropriate form for a period of two years, beginning April 12, 2010, and ending on April 11, 2012, the rite of “Reception to the Roster of Ordained Ministers,” for use by synodical bishops in receiving onto the roster of the ordained ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America those pastors on the roster of Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries who were not previously on the ELCA roster of ordained ministers or on the roster of ordained ministers of a predecessor church body, who have been approved by a candidacy committee of a synod of the ELCA, and who have received a call in this church;**

**To emphasize that no other use of this rite is authorized; and**

**To express gratitude for the thoughtful work of all those who contributed to the development of this rite.**

## **6. SITE FOR THE 2013 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY**

*Background:*

The Office of the Secretary has the constitutional responsibility to “arrange for and manage meetings of the Churchwide Assembly . . .” (ELCA bylaw 13.41.02.) and presents its recommendations for Churchwide Assembly sites to the Church Council for approval.

*Church Council Action:*

**To designate the David L. Lawrence Convention Center, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania—subject to the satisfactory completion of negotiations in the judgment of the secretary of this church—as the site for the thirteenth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, August 12–18, 2013.**

## **7. REQUEST FROM THE LUTHERAN MAGAZINE**

*Background:*

In a memo dated February 1, 2010, Daniel Lehmann, editor of *The Lutheran* magazine, wrote: “*The Lutheran* magazine requests permission to solicit those on the rosters of the ELCA to seek contributions to offset the costs associated with providing complimentary copies of

the magazine to rostered leaders. According to the Office of the Secretary, a best practice for such solicitation would be to gain the consent of the Church Council following consultation with the Conference of Bishops.”

The request is made in accordance with ELCA bylaw 11.41.06.:

No churchwide appeal to congregations or individuals of this church for the raising of funds shall be conducted by this church or churchwide units without the consent of the Churchwide Assembly, following consultation with the Conference of Bishops. No appeal to selected congregations and individuals of this church for the raising of funds shall be conducted by this church or churchwide units without the consent of the Church Council, following consultation with either the Conference of Bishops or specific synods as appropriate. Proposals for such special appeals shall be presented to the Church Council through the appropriate council committee with recommendations by the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

At its March 2010 meeting, the Conference of Bishops supported the request by *The Lutheran* magazine.

*Church Council Action:*

**To acknowledge the value of having well informed rostered leaders of this church;**

**To commend *The Lutheran* magazine for its generosity in providing complimentary copies to 16,467 rostered leaders and 711 surviving spouses;**

**To acknowledge the budget constraints under which *The Lutheran* operates as a self-sustaining publication of this church, especially in the current economic climate; and**

**To authorize the magazine to request donations from those who receive free copies.**

## **8. 2010 CURRENT FUND AND WORLD HUNGER AUTHORIZATIONS**

*Background:*

Over the past month, the churchwide organization has been in the process of closing the books for the 2009 fiscal year, receiving adjusted mission-support plans from synods for 2010, and adjusting the 2010 income budget to reflect both the 2009 financial results and the adjusted plans from synods. At the time of preparing the adjusted income estimates, 54 synods had adjusted their mission support plans for a net decrease of nearly \$7.6 million from their prior plans. This level of revision is within the range estimated last fall when the initial 2010 spending authorization was prepared; therefore, no adjustment is

anticipated at this time.

Other income adjustments have been identified. Vision for Mission, with a renewed focus and effort, is estimated to increase \$200,000. Discussions with Thrivent Financial for Lutherans have allowed the reinstatement of the amount previously reduced, \$200,000. Improved market value of endowment funds at the end of fiscal 2009 allows an increase in the estimated endowment distributions by \$83,550. Decreases in Missionary Sponsorship support over the last few years result in lowering the estimated income from this source by \$100,000. As a result of the adjustments, the churchwide organization may increase its current fund spending plans by \$277,200 to a new total of \$69,300,000.

No change is anticipated in the World Hunger Appeal 2010 budget of \$18,700,000. But a shift between sources due to recent trends is anticipated, with gifts through direct giving from individuals and congregations increasing \$700,000, endowment distributions increasing \$100,000, and gifts from congregations through synods decreasing \$800,000. Planned expenditures of World Hunger fund balances in excess of required reserves, resulting from positive variances in both 2009 income and expense, total \$1,631,516 and bring total anticipated expenditures in fiscal 2010 to \$20,331,516.

The revised allocation reflects increases for depreciation expenses caused by major investment in computer systems and building improvements, higher insurance costs, and other needs identified since last fall. The adjustments were funded by a combination of the increased income estimate, reallocations from the Strategic Initiative Fund, and reduced cost estimates for the Churchwide Assembly.

*Church Council Action:*

To approve a revised current fund spending authorization for fiscal year 2010 of \$69,300,000;

To approve a revised total World Hunger spending authorization for fiscal year 2010 of \$20,331,516.

## 9. REVISIONS TO SYNODICAL MISSION-SUPPORT PLANS

*Background:*

The Church Council has responsibility for reviewing and taking action on synod mission-support plans as an interdependent partner with congregations and synods in implementing and strengthening the financial support for the work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA constitutional provisions 8.15. and 10.71.). In

light of the continued impact of the economic recession, together with the decisions of some congregations to reduce or withhold mission support, the Budget and Finance Committee made the following recommendation for Church Council action.

Revisions in synod plans following the November 2009 meeting of the Church Council were received and reviewed by the Conference of Bishops at its March 2010 meeting. They forward the following recommendations for the changes as follows.

### 2010 Synodical Mission-Support Plans

*Church Council Action:*

To acknowledge with sadness that circumstances in the following synods have led to decisions to seek a decrease in the percentage of sharing of 2010 mission-support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries; to encourage each synod to continue to work to grow mission support in the synod; and to request that each synod develop a plan, in consultation with the churchwide organization, to restore or surpass the previous level of mission support sharing: Eastern Washington-Idaho; Pacifica; Grand Canyon; Central States; Arkansas-Oklahoma; Southwestern Texas; Western Iowa; North/West Lower Michigan; Southern Ohio; Upstate New York; Lower Susquehanna; West Virginia-Western Maryland; Virginia; South Carolina; and Caribbean synods;

To acknowledge with thanksgiving the decision of the following synod to increase the percentage of sharing of 2010 mission-support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries: Northeastern Iowa Synod;

To acknowledge with thanksgiving the decision of the following synods to maintain the percentage of sharing of 2010 mission-support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries: Alaska; Northwest Washington; Oregon; Montana; Sierra Pacific; Rocky Mountain; Eastern North Dakota; South Dakota; Northwestern Minnesota; Northeastern Minnesota; Southwestern Minnesota; Minneapolis Area; Saint Paul Area; Southeastern Minnesota; Nebraska; Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana; Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast; Northern Illinois; Central/Southern Illinois; Southeastern Iowa; Northern Great Lakes; Northwest Synod of Wisconsin; East-Central Synod of Wisconsin; Greater Milwaukee; South-Central Synod of Wisconsin; La Crosse Area; Indiana-Kentucky; Northwestern Ohio; Northeastern Ohio; New Jersey; New England; Metropolitan New York; Slovak Zion; Allegheny; Northeastern Pennsylvania; Northwestern



Pennsylvania; Southeastern Pennsylvania; Southwestern Pennsylvania; Upper Susquehanna; Delaware-Maryland; Metropolitan Washington, D.C.; Southeastern; and Florida-Bahamas synods; and

To thank the bishops and leaders of every synod as they strive to be faithful to shared commitments within the ELCA, and to encourage synod and churchwide staff, including the directors for evangelical mission, to deepen their partnership in efforts to strengthen the financial support of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

#### 2011 Synodical Mission-Support Plans

##### *Background:*

Given the continuing strain on congregational income flowing to synods, synods are in the process of adjusting their 2010 mission support plans and are working to create or revise their 2011 plans in anticipation of their synod assemblies. Therefore, 2011 plans have been received from only 31 synods.

##### *Church Council Action:*

To acknowledge with sadness that circumstances in the following synods have led to decisions to seek a decrease from prior levels in the percentage of sharing of 2011 mission-support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries; to encourage each synod to continue to work to grow mission support in the synod; and to request that each synod develop a plan, in consultation with the churchwide organization, to restore or surpass the previous level of mission-support sharing: Eastern Washington-Idaho; Montana; Grand Canyon; Central States; Arkansas-Oklahoma; Western Iowa; North/West Lower Michigan; Southwestern Pennsylvania; Lower Susquehanna; and Virginia synods;

To acknowledge with thanksgiving the decision of the following synods to increase the percentage of sharing of 2011 mission-support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries: South Dakota; Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana; Metropolitan New York; and Northeastern Pennsylvania synods;

To acknowledge with thanksgiving the decision of the following synods to maintain the percentage of sharing of 2011 mission-support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries: Eastern North Dakota; Northeastern Minnesota; Southwestern Minnesota; Southeastern Minnesota; Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast; Central/Southern Illinois; Southeastern Iowa; East-Central Synod of Wisconsin; South-Central

Synod of Wisconsin; La Crosse Area; Indiana-Kentucky; Northwestern Ohio; Northeastern Ohio; New England; Allegheny; Southeastern; and Florida-Bahamas synods;

To thank the bishops and synod leaders of every synod as they strive to be faithful to shared commitments within the ELCA, and to encourage synod and churchwide staff, including the directors for evangelical mission, to deepen their partnership in efforts to strengthen the financial support of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

To request that all synods to submit their 2011 mission-support plans prior to their 2010 synod assemblies.

#### **10. SOCIAL STATEMENT DEVELOPMENT**

##### *Background:*

The 2011 Churchwide Assembly is scheduled to consider a social statement on genetics. In response to concerns expressed at the March 2010 meeting of the Conference of Bishops and elsewhere about the pace of the development of social statements, the Church Council took the following action.

##### *Church Council Action:*

To affirm the current time line for the development of a social statement on genetics for consideration by the 2011 Churchwide Assembly; and

To request the Church in Society program unit to convene conversations related to the development of future social statements and to bring a report and possible recommendations to the November 2010 meeting of the Church Council.

#### **11. ELECTION OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CHURCH IN SOCIETY PROGRAM UNIT**

##### *Background:*

According to bylaw 14.21.21. of the ELCA *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions:*

Unless otherwise specified in this constitution and bylaws, the Church Council shall elect the executive director for each churchwide program unit to a four-year term in consultation with and with the approval of the presiding bishop of this church. Nomination of a candidate for election shall be made by the presiding bishop after consultation with the appropriate program committee for each position. . . .

The Church Council met in executive session to receive a recommendation from Presiding Bishop Mark S.

Hanson for the executive director for the Church in Society.

The nomination by Presiding Bishop Hanson of the Rev. Rebecca S. Larson as executive director for the Church in Society program unit came following consultation with representatives of the unit's program committee

*Church Council Action:*

**To re-elect the Rev. Rebecca S. Larson to a four-year term as executive director of the program unit for Church in Society beginning October 14, 2010.**

**12. OTHER ELECTIONS**

**A. Board of Trustees of the Endowment Fund of the ELCA and Advisory Committee for Development Services and the ELCA Foundation**

*Church Council Action:*

**To elect Mr. John Bauder, Tampa, Florida, to a term expiring 2016 on the Board of Trustees of the Endowment Fund of the ELCA and Advisory Committee for Development Services and the ELCA Foundation.**

**B. Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, Board of Directors**

*Church Council Action:*

**To elect Mr. Robert Hahn to a term expiring 2015 on the Board of Trustees of Augsburg Fortress, Publishers.**

**C. Audit Committee**

*Church Council Action:*

**To elect John F. Timmer to the ELCA Audit Committee for a final two-year term beginning August 2010.**

**D. Social Ministry Organizations**

*Background:*

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America serves as a corporate member of certain inter-Lutheran organizations and affiliated social ministry organizations. The role of corporate members includes the responsibility to elect ELCA representatives to the organization's board of directors as prescribed in the organization's governing documents. The relationship of the ELCA to certain inter-Lutheran organizations and affiliated social ministry organizations is expressed through the Church in Society

unit.

The ELCA serves as a corporate member of Lutheran Medical Center, Brooklyn, New York; the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society, Sioux Falls, S.D.; Lutheran Services in America, Baltimore, Md.; Mosaic, Inc., Omaha, Neb.; and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, Baltimore, Md. In the case of Lutheran Medical Center, Brooklyn, New York, the ELCA's annual election of board members complies with their constitutional requirement that this action constitute an annual meeting of the corporate member. The Church in Society program unit has forwarded to the Church Council the following nominations for positions on the boards of these organizations.

*Church Council Action:*

**To elect to the board of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service for a second three-year term expiring in 2012: Ms. Ruth Henrichs;**

**To elect to the board of Lutheran Services in America for a three-year term expiring in 2013: Mr. Brian Hofland;**

**To re-elect to the board of trustees of Lutheran Medical Center to three-year terms expiring in 2013: Mr. Lawrence DiGiovanna and Pr. David Rommereim; and**

**To elect to the board of trustees of Lutheran Medical Center to three-year terms expiring in 2013: Ms. Maria Carlson, Mr. Dale Christensen, Mr. Frank Comerford, Mr. Thomas Edwards, Ms. Kristine Gebbie, Ms. Emma Graeber Porter, Mr. Gerald Luterman, and Pr. Jeanne Warfield.**

**E. Seminary Governing Boards**

*Church Council Action:*

**To elect to the board of directors of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Chicago, Ill., for three-year terms expiring in 2013: Mr. Clarence J. Atwood, Jr., Ms. Trina G. Gould, and Ms. Sarah Stegemoeller;**

**To re-elect to the board of directors of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Penn., for three-year terms expiring in 2013: Ms. Lynn Askew, Ms. Addie Butler, and Mr. Andrew Willis.**

**To elect to the board of directors of the Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, Calif., to a six-year term expiring in 2016: Mr. Paul F. Tillquist.**

